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ABSTRACT

School safety is a topic of national debate due to the severity of student violence in the last few years. While the percentage of violent incidences in schools nationwide has decreased, the problem resides in the increased severity of such crimes. Teachers are facing random acts of violence seldom faced in the past. This paper discusses strategies for school administrators in addressing youth behavior problems: psychological profiles of students, suicide prevention strategies, targeting children and parents before behavior turns violent or to drugs, management by wandering around, restorative-justice, parental involvement, restrictive measures, school administration and litigation, sexual harassment, constitutional rights, religion and school dress, special rules for disciplining students with disabilities, conducting a manifestation review, and future trends. (Contains 27 references.) (DFR)

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Developing a Common Faith and Ethic for School Safety

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Reflections On School Safety

Stephens (1999) finds there are two types of administrators: those have faced a crisis and those who are about to. School safety is a topic of national debate due to the severity of student violence in the last few years. Although most states have passed measures to increase incarceration and punishment for school crimes, the percentage of school violence nation wide has decreased. Coles (1999) discussed an annual teachers poll by the *Metropolitan Life Insurance Company* which indicated a decline in the level of school violence but when it comes to reporting that they have been victims of a crime, students and teachers in urban, suburban and rural areas are on an equal footing. The problem is in the increased severity of such crimes.

There are no easy answers, nor quick cheap technological fixes to the problem of school safety. Dewey once noted that schools are miniature societies. The problems of the larger society are reflected in the culture of public schools. Militia groups spout their message of hate language, intolerance, bigotry twenty four hours a day over the internet while anti-government groups provide detailed information on how to build bombs to destroy public buildings including post offices, police facilities and transportation hubs. At the national level, our children see governmental officials engaged in a perpetual exercise of the politics of personal destruction. At the international level, diplomacy by pinpoint accurate missile bombing to prevent loss of life while inflicting collateral damage on the guilty and innocent alike is the wave of the future. Powerful lobbying groups which influence national legislation like the *National Rifle Association* see gun ownership as a constitutional right. But that right does not extend to widespread misuse of fire arms, or open access by dysfunctional individuals to weapons that threaten the population. Efforts to provide protections from guns in the wrong hands, national funding for buying guns and safety controls are bearing some fruit but the problem remains.

Teachers are facing random acts of violence seldom faced in the past. Graham (1999) reported on a 15 year-old Tulsa high school sophomore, with no past problem record, who attempted to rape a 62 year old teacher who had taught for 26 years in Tulsa public schools. The student attacked the teacher while she was getting supplies out of a closet,

threw a cloth over her head, forced her to the floor, while she screamed and fought him. Students and teachers nearby heard the commotion. One teacher opened the close door and saw the youth naked from the waist down. Rumors at the school indicated it was part of a gang ritual. Due to confidentiality requirements, school administrators could not release information on the student's disciplinary record or information about an ongoing investigation. Preliminary indications are the student had no prior behavioral problems. The teacher is taking an indefinite amount of time off. Informal contacts with teachers and students, suggest they fear violence and are more anxious, nervous, and fearful of others. Lack of trust is perhaps one of the most damaging results of school violence. Scherer (1999) reported widespread reaction to school violence. In North Carolina lawmakers want to suspend for a year any student who makes a bomb threat, whether or not the individual is convicted; in Atlanta, a district is mandating see through book bags; in Clayton, Missouri some local media outlets have agreed not to broadcast news of bomb threats in an effort to reduce copycat pranks. Some school officials are hiring security consultants at $500 a day. Congress is getting into the act with a juvenile-crime bill. In North Carolina school superintendents would be given discretion to suspend a student for a full year, and parents would be held civilly liable "if they knew or should have known of a threat and made no reasonable effort to prevent the threat". In Maryland, one day, 36% of the students stayed home because of false bomb threats. A child was arrested who made a joke of saying " I will throw a burrito at the school". Charles Montesano, School Superintendent in Emerson, New Jersey, said that he thought one of the most sad things that has happened as a result of Littleton is that we don't have the opportunity to reach out and save kids who can be saved" (Scherer, 1999).

In a litigious society, lawsuits are lurking behind administrative decisions. This is true at the societal level as witness the Waco investigation focus on who did what when rather than on the cult that committed horrendous crimes against humanity-children and women. The cult left alone might well have ended up like the James Jones mass suicide in Guyana. In the massive investigation of Waco, few if anyone appears to be concerned about the loss of law enforcement lives, or the power of the media with reporters urging and criticizing federal and state officers for not ending the incident sooner.

Strategies for School Administrators in Addressing Youth Behavior Problems

Psychological Profiles of Students

Chaddock (2000) discussed new trends to develop profiles of students likely to cause violence in the classroom. Although critics of the policy find a danger in labeling youngsters that might result in rumors, suspicions, stigmas, and stereotyping, a growing number of school administrators believe profiling can be another tool in their efforts to address school violence. The profile will circulate among students, staff, parents and older high school students to increase reports of those individuals who fit a picture of predisposition to violence. As early as 1914, according to Butts and Cremin (1953), John B. Watson at John Hopkins University, believed a theory of explaining physical explanations would be enough to explain all physical behavior. There was a period when phrenology or predicting behavior by analyzing physical profiles was rejected although

the concept has been resurrected in recent years. Some school psychologists and others call for better human relations in schools rather than concentrating on profiling (Chaddock, 2000:4). In an environment of heightened awareness of an increase in student and adult anger and behavioral control problems, educators feel they need to call on every resource available to achieve school safety.

Suicide Prevention Strategies

Portner (2000) points out that youth suicide rates (10-19) have tripled in the past 30 years, reaching an all time high of 2,700 in 1997. One out of every three school districts loses a student to suicide each year, sometimes on their own campus. Los Angeles has implemented a system wide approach to youth suicide while many school districts are attempting to provide a healthy tension free school environment to the degree possible. Some studies have shown societies that permit more physical contact with students and with fewer guns have less youth suicide but in a litigious society physical contact with students is not permissible. Developing a school policy of tolerance and civility provides a good model for youngsters dealing with control issues.

Targeting Children and Parents Before Behavior Turns Violent or To Drugs

Holmstrom (1999) discussed a program – *Families and Schools Together*—that seeks to have parents spend 15 minutes of undivided time every day with each of their children. Based on the theme that parents know their children best, FAST has an eight to ten week program with a collaborative team of professionals forming a partnership between the school, community agencies, and the families. Fast provides a structured approach using specific games, one-on-one sharing, families eating together, music and singing, talking shop among parents, and joining in group activities. Testimonials from parents indicate remarkable changes from Fast. The heart of the program is 15 minutes of child initiated play with parents being non-judgmental, non-directive and following the child's lead. A plus of the program is fostering of new friendships and developing support networks for parents. One criticism of the program is the cost of some $3,900 for reaching families, and four months of intense staff training. The DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund has given $2.4 million for national replication through the *Alliance for Children and Families*.

Some school districts have developed an administrative philosophy of **management by wandering around.** School administrators walk the hallways, check in classrooms and have found it helps to limit school violence and roughness in hallway games, and gives teachers the security of knowing there is support available when needed. Wandering around also gives staff and teachers a sense of community especially when random school violence has increased in degree of severity.

Marks (1999) discussed a program for **restorative-justice** that has been implemented in Vermont. Cases of underage drinking, drunk driving, behavioral problems have been dealt with by appearing before a *Reparative Board*, a group of volunteers charged with assuring that low-risk, nonviolent offenders are made aware of the impact of their behavior on the people around them and find ways to make amends. The program is an

outgrowth of a victims rights movement, where movement is toward repairing the damage done to the community, not punishment. Over a dozen states are trying the innovative justice plan. The plan was implemented since over $34 billion a year is spent on correction, more than spent on education, and communities felt no safer. Under restorative-justice, communities tend to feel safe and victims of crime are helped. Vermonters wanted safe communities with violent offenders locked up. Others from thieves to drunken drivers were given opportunities for accountability. Under Vermont's rethinking of the criminal justice system, prisoners are not just given job skills, but are trained to be more pro-social. There has been over an 80% success rate to date with the 4,000 offenders who have gone through the states reparative justice program. To date a major problem is victims non-participation in the program.

As mentioned earlier, **school violence often is rooted in anger**. Ruckman (1999) reported that Columbine High School murderers Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris's killing spree was aimed at athletes and minorities and fueled by anger. Youth emotion is volatile. Anger control in peace curricula and peer mediation help youngsters deal with fear, hurt, rejection in relationships, loneliness and frustration. Comprehensive school violence prevention plans are needed in all schools. These plans require participation of students, parents, administrators, staff and communities. School violence ready response strategies are essential in today's public schools. Most school district administrators have already had drills involving local law enforcement personnel, medical evacuation teams, students and school personnel Understanding the personality or characteristics of a school; a multidimensional approach to identifying early warning signs of violence; intervention plans for troubled youth; and a crisis response plan are essentials in preparing for random violence. Already helping youngsters learn of the importance of school safety, and that it is not bad to let officials know of student plans for violence through confidential channels has been paying off.

O'Driscoll (1999) reported on new booklets ***Ten Ways to Fight Hate*, and *Responding to Hate at School*** designed to help citizens confront prejudice in their communities. The booklets are being distributed to over 1 million policymakers. Contents are based on the Southern Poverty Law Center's analysis of hate based crimes statistics for 1997, the latest available. Every school principal, major, governor, Congressperson, and state attorney in the nation will receive the booklet. Over 8,000 hate incidents ranging from harassment, assaults and murders to vandalism and property crimes were committed in 1997 according to FBI statistics. Over 500 hate groups are tracked by the Southern Poverty Law Center. In addition an untold number of acts of violence were not reported due to embarrassment or desire for privacy to protect family members for retribution for revealing such crimes. The booklet authors urge citizens to take action, unite with others, support victims, create alternatives to hatred, speak out against hate, lobby political leaders to take a stand and teacher tolerance to children at home and in schools. Fight hate is a form of civil defense according to Jim Carrier, a journalist who wrote *Ten Ways* for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Parental Involvement (1999)

School administrators need to share the responsibility of curbing school violence with parents. School alone can't stop violence. Some suggestions that have been provided parents through seminars, workshops and Department of Education Reports like *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.* These suggestions include:

1. Teaching children—parents are the first teachers of their children and need to help them develop nonviolent coping strategies. Parents should develop consistent rules and hold to them.
2. Parents should be the first to recognize signs of potentially violent behavior in their children. Although often blinded by affection, signs such as bullying, frequent uncontrollable angry outbursts, small acts of violence should lead to professional help. Parents need to be proactive and listen to their children.
3. Getting involved helps students succeed in school and schools need the help of parents particularly in large schools. Parental involvement often leads to less antisocial behavior and parents see their role as stakeholder in the educational enterprise.

In law abiding communities like Fayetteville, Arkansas hate crimes are becoming more frequent. A 16 year old openly gay boy was subjected to verbal harassment at school. He returned verbal insults. One December morning while walking with his friends, the gay student was attacked by eight teenage boys. The boys beat and kicked him in the back with cowboy boots leaving the student with a black eye, bruised kidneys and a nose broken in two places. Two of the juveniles were sentenced to probation for the assault. Parents of the gay boy received abusive phone calls and have since pressed local merchants to post Hate Free Zone Signs. Hate crimes occur in all areas of the country, among all classes, in all ethnic groups and present a challenge to the social fabric. Fights leading to violence in schools often can be prevented through identifying clear rules, regulations and conduct expectations (Newcomb, 1999).

Restrictive Measures

School districts throughout the nation have installed metal detectors, surveillance cameras, search and seizure, and school uniforms. States have passed legislation restricting freedom of public school students and increased penalties for dysfunctional behavior. Trying children as adults, giving life sentences, implementing zero tolerance for bringing weapons on campus, expelling students from school for infractions of student policy guidelines, increasing police and law enforcement patrols on school campuses are a few of the strategies being implemented in the nation. In Florida as in other states, law enforcement officers are on campus, patrolling school halls.

School Administration and Litigation

Often as school administrators engage in parent conferences, the first words heard are "I'm going to sue you, the school district and the teacher." Litigation is part of the culture of public schools in the United States as in the larger society. Following are a few areas that can affect schools safety and involve school districts in litigation.

Sexual Harassment

Davis V. Monroe County Board of Education (1999) has been going through appeals for a number of years* winding its way to the Supreme Court which ruled that districts could

be held liable only if they were "deliberately indifferent" to information about "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive" harassment among students. The high court ruling was influenced by *Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District* (1989) which involved alleged sexual harassment of a student by a teacher. In Gebser the court ruled that district officials must be aware of a teacher's harassing behavior and be deliberately indifferent to it for a district to be held liable for damages under Title IX. Most school districts in the U.S. have a variety of initiatives to teach acceptable student behavior. Most state departments of education and school districts have policy handbook guidelines to identify inappropriate school behavior, provide channels for reporting harassment, describe hostile school environments and identify avenues for confidentiality in dealing with the issue. Workshops, seminars, books, and periodicals are provided for teachers, administrators, staff and students to prevent to the greatest degree possible, inappropriate student behavior (Van Patten, 1994). In *Davis* 1999, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote of his fear that the ruling (providing for district financial liability for student harassment) would lead to an avalanche of lawsuits and intrude into the nation's public school classrooms. However, Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the majority of the Court noted that damages are not available for simple acts of teasing among school children. There will continue to be cases of 'he said, she said' that will challenge school administrators to hold more workshops and seminars on harassment (Walsh, 1999).

Constitutional Rights

Each of the initiatives noted above to improve school safety has possibilities for litigation. School uniform policies have been subject to litigation by parents as have zero tolerance policy. To protect student rights to privacy, security cameras cannot be placed in bathrooms nor can strip searches be allowed although many school systems have reduced student violence through installing television cameras in classrooms and hallways. Although some districts in 'bible belt' areas want to post the Ten Commandments in schools, such action is subject to litigation on the basis of denial of First Amendments protections which include: the government may not support religion, may not reject religion, and may not get excessively entangled in religion. Parents belonging to various religious groups not in the so called mainstream, may bring lawsuits to prevent their children from being exposed to any form of religious expression or teaching. Right wing groups may espouse firmly held convictions opposite to a democratic, pluralistic, open society. Children of these groups may feel justified in perpetrating violence on others who differ in their beliefs.

Religion and School Dress

Religion in public schools continues to be an area of continuing debate as questions rise about prayers broadcast over the public school address system, the permissibility of nonsectarian prayers during school graduation ceremonies and other forms of religious expression. President William Jefferson Clinton provided some guidelines for religious instruction in public schools and instructed the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Education to issue a bulletin outlining protected religious activity. Clinton's list included permissible activities as saying grace before meals, debating religious topics with classmates, expressing religious beliefs in school assignments and wearing clothing with religious messages to the same extent that students are permitted to wear clothing containing other comparable messages (*Your School and the Law*, 1996).

School Dress Codes

Since implementation in 1995, the Phoenix School District has found that dress codes result in more focused, better- behaved students. However, the district has spent over $116,000 in legal fees to keep its school uniform policy. The American Civil Liberties Union, parental groups and activists have opposed school uniform policies but lawsuits have in general failed in the courts. School uniform policies have been implemented in California and New York City's school system. To avoid litigation, legal experts suggest not making decisions without gaining feedback from the community, parents, local businesses, the religious community, parents, teachers, staff, and other interested parties. A U.S. District Judge in Louisiana ruled against 40 parents who sued the Bossier Parish School Board in May 1999. The judge found that the district's attempts to curb school violence by requiring school uniforms did not infringe on constitutionally mandated liberties. A police officer, a supporter of dress codes, testified that there were 40 identifiable street gangs in Bossier Parish, Louisiana Schools. The officer said gang members were at every public elementary, middle, and high school in the district (*Your School and the Law, 1999*: 8). Simonson, and Trump (1999) found school uniforms promoted a more effective learning climate; increased safety and security, fostered unity and school pride, eliminated label competition, ensured appropriate attire, saved parents money, and opened other opportunities for self express. Simonson and Trump suggest setting up a uniform policy that can withstand legal challenges. The policy ideally should include:

1. Setting reasonable dress rules.
2. Allow alternative means of expression-wearing buttons, jewelry, accessories, circulating petitions, using bulletin boards, permitting students to display religious messages the same way other messages are displayed.
3. Give students an opportunity to transfer to other schools.
4. Set up specific discipline and phase-in period. Give students a few week to get used to an adjust to the policy.
5. Consider voluntary policy or opt-out provision.
6. Assist families that can't afford uniforms
7. Allow dress-down days.

Simonson (1999) reported that Phoenix Preparatory Academy set up a student uniform Policy. Two students refused to wear the uniform. One wore a T-shirt with a picture of the American flag, the other with a picture of Jesus Christ. Students were asked to transfer. They refused and their parents distributed literature criticizing school uniform policy to other students. The school got a temporary court order to get compliance. Parents sued for $1 million claiming the policy violated First Amendment Rights. The Court ruled the uniform policy was reasonable and the student had to comply or go to another school.

In *Wallace v. Ford* (1972), the Court recognized the rights of school authorities to establish regulations needed to carry out the mission of the schools including safety, health, decency and civility. In this case the state interest in carrying out the educational mission of the school outweighed the personal liberty interest in a personal appearance. The nature of public school education requires balancing rights and protections of

students and requires limitations on one's personal liberty. There are multiple perspectives on student constitutional rights, but it is clear even with a trend toward renewal of *loco parentis* there needs to be adequate procedural safeguards for students prior to the imposition of any disciplinary measures.

In *Aledo Independent School District* (Texas, 1999) the Court of Appeals ruled that transferring to an evening AEP classes on campus was not an "expulsion" from student's regular campus within the meaning of the Gun Free Schools Act and the Board's decision to uphold transfer was final and not appealable. A principal expelled a student for bringing a gun on school property. The Superintendent modified the sanction, permitting the student to attend evening classes. The student sued. The District Court issued a temporary injunction allowing the student to attend regular classes. On appeal, the principal's decision was upheld.

In Wallace v. Bryant School District Arkansas (1999), a parent brought a lawsuit against the school district and teacher, alleging discipline of the student, consisting of spending three class periods in a room adjacent to a choir room, constituted false arrest and imprisonment, negligent infliction of emotional distress, and deprivation of constitutional rights under § 1983. The District Court held that 1) the student had not been falsely arrested or imprisoned, 2) tort of negligent infliction of emotional distress was not recognized under Arkansas law, 3) the school district and teacher were immune from any tort liability on negligence claim, and 4) the student's substantive due process rights were not violated.

In Isaacs v. Board of Education of Howard County, Maryland (1999), a high school student sued the board of education and school officials alleging that defendants'refusal to permit her to wear a headwrap in school in order top celebrate her cultural heritage violated her constitutional right to free speech. The District Court held that the schools' "no-hats" policy did not violate student's free speech rights or her right to be secure in her person.

In *Page v. The School District of Philadelphia (1999)* a middle school student of Native American heritage who was injured in assault perpetrated by other students sued the school district, individual employees, city and city police officer. The Court ruled that an agreement between a student's family and school officials, intended to ensure a student's safety, did not give rise to a special relationship; that the agreement did not give rise to a state-created danger; that the assault could not, as a matter of law, serve as a basis for §1983 action on the theory of policy, practice, or custom maintained in deliberate indifference to action taken by subordinates; unsupported allegation that district and city failed to properly train their employees was insufficient to support failure to train claim under § 1981; and the district, city and all individual employees were statutorily immune from liability for intentional infliction of emotional distress under Pennsylvania law.

Special Rules for Disciplining Students With Disabilities (Bluth, Osborne, and Sinars, 1999).

1. May be suspended for up to 10 school days during the year just as regular students.
2. Removal means keeping a student out of an educational program, away from special education.
3. Change of placement-a series of removals of less that 10 days is permissible but if more than 10 days in a school year or if the series constitutes a pattern requiring removal, it is considered a change of placement. A pattern depends on length of removal, proximity to one another, total amount of time a child is removed etc. If school personnel and parent's agree to a change of placement, there is no need to bring into play the due process provision of the law. Everything must be in writing and parents must be informed of due process rights.
4. After 10 days of removal procedural and substantive requirements of *IDEA (The Individuals With Disabilities Act*) kicks in.
    - Schools have to provide a FAPE to the student.
        a) Services depend on length of exclusion.
        b) Progress in the general curriculum is determined by the school personnel and /or IEP team to analyze what the school are state law considers to be included in the general curriculum.
        c) IEP meetings are required within ten business days after the first removal of a student for more than 10 school days.

            1) Under new regulations, students removed for the first time for more than 10 days in a school year must have a functional behavior assessment, with IEP meetings to develop an assessment plan and to assist in formally conducting the functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan.
            2) If a student already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP team must review it, modify it as necessary. Individual members of an IEP team must individually review the intervention plan to determine if changes are needed.

Conduct Manifestation Review

If a change in placement occurs, a school must conduct a manifestation determination review to determine whether the student's misbehavior is caused by his disability. A notice must be sent to the parents as a procedural safeguards notice. A conduct review is required. To determine whether or not a student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the manifestation team must.

- Determine if the student's IEP and placement before removal were appropriate and special ed services were provided consistent with the IEP. If deficiencies are discovered in required services, these deficiencies must be corrected quickly.
- The student's disability didn't impair the ability of the student to understand the consequences of his or her behavior.
- The student's disability didn't impair the ability of the student to control the behavior.

The student can't be removed. However, if the team makes all three determinations the student can be removed. Exceptions to the 10 day removal rule include carrying a weapon to school or selling drugs. In such a case school personnel can place the student in an interim alternative education setting for not more than 45 days. Parents must in all cases be given rights of protest, appeal, and litigation for reinstatement in the regular classrooms.

The court cases and issues noted suggest a tightening of constitutional rights of students with disabilities in public schools. While public school safety is vital and administrators need to have the right to create a culture for safe schools, there should be an awareness of possible excesses in limiting students' constitutional rights in a free, pluralistic Democratic society committed to protecting individual rights of all citizens, young and old.

Future Trends

Daniel (1998) found that courts are increasingly moving toward limiting student rights. Schools are being awarded classroom safety grants (1999) through a Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Initiative. The program is a joint project of the Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services to develop methods to identify troubled youths and prevent violence. President Clinton has taken a leadership role in exploring avenues to make schools safer. Some 54 school districts have been awarded $106 million for these safety grants. A variety of safety plans are being implemented. Jonesboro, Arkansas is planning to offer in-home counseling for families with children deemed vulnerable to violent behavior.

It remains to be seen how lawsuits against gun manufactures and parents whose children have committed crimes will fit into the safety equation. If school administrators and their districts can be held accountable for sexual harassment on the basis they "knew or should have known" of the situation, there is no reason parents cannot also be held accountable. If children are building bombs in their garages, parents either knew or should have known there might be violence as an outcome of the activity.

Gun advocates and manufacturers also, regardless of their strong convictions about the right to bear arms, should be accountable for the access to weapons by people prone to violence. Buying guns with state and federal funds is a start but much more needs to be done to rein in violence. People from other countries always wonder why Americans need to carry so many guns. They often think of Americans in terms of the wild west and the most violent society. Over 35,000 people are killed each year by firearms with some 200 million guns in private hands. Gun and weapon control will be an important part of the dialogue for safe schools in the future.

Meanwhile as Barrett, Burns, and Schwartz (2000) point out school administrators can implement zero tolerance policy being careful to:

- Define weapons covered.
- Identify where the policy will be enforced.

- Set guidelines for calling law enforcement officers and state agencies.
- Provide handbooks to identify discipline for students, staff, parents, faculty.
- Spell out due process hearing guidelines.
- Seek the support of students and parents in reporting any violations of school policy.

Communication and information is a vital link in gaining community support for zero tolerance policy. As part of this communication process Eastridge and Graham (2000) suggest guidelines for dealing with news media after a school violence problem. This is particularly important in an age of media zealousness in search of news stories to sell their products. Eastridge and Graham suggest:

- Cooperating with media.
- Finding out as much as possible about an incident before talking to the media.
- Giving clear cut statements since TV and radio coverage is always a short soundbite.
- Listen to media questions and answer them without bias, prejudice or anger.
- Never talk off the record since media reporters have a tendency to engage in spinning or embellishing a story.
- Never say no comment but indicated legal advisors have advised us not to speak on a subject.
- Take every opportunity to provide a positive upbeat outlook for the school.
- Project a confident, concerned image on television. Try to appear alone rather than with a crowd since it tends to project a stronger in charge image.

In a soundbite media world, school incidents often tend to get blown out of all proportion. It is especially important to understand teen age and youth psychology. At the end of each school year, students often make threats designed only to get a day off from school. Common sense and good rapport with the school community often can defuse situations before they get out of hand. In a nation of changing demographics, working with diversity, multicultural understandings are vital. Having educators at all levels work to increase student achievement across cultures and especially with children at risk, is essential. Enhancing student achievement, giving individuals a feeling of self esteem and confidence in their ability, helps to reduce tension, and eliminate feelings of inferiority and lack of self worth.

With nationwide efforts to measure student achievement through standardized tests, a sense of balance is important. Currently there are signs of a backlash against standards testing among students, teachers and parents. In Florida schools are rated A through D and below. Schools with high numbers of special education students are rated low although they are doing an excellent job with their students with learning deficiencies. This leads to a sense of frustration among teachers, staff and administrators who see funding reduced since it is based on student achievement levels. In Florida there have been some teacher protests over statewide testing requirements that fail to take into account the complexities of student populations being testing. Olson (2000) indicates there have been some uneven and even careless implementation of standardized testing programs throughout the nation. Some educators, such as Alfie Kohn, believe the emphasis on standards has resulted in narrow, back to basics curriculum and substitutes a focus on results for a deeper engagement in learning (Olson, 2000:13). John Dewey

often addressed the problem of growth that occurs over time in schools rather than the narrow standardized measurement focus that delimits parameters for learning.

The public School Administrator of the future will have to be a culture shaper, manager, instructional leader and ambassador for civility, comity, and tolerance. The culture of schools needs to be managed to assure continual mutual respect, kindness, and human decency in the treatment of pupils, teachers, staff, and parents. The school administrator needs to encourage teachers to treat pupils with respect and not put them down, belittle, criticize openly, or make fun of them. Finally, administrators and their faculties need to be ambassadors for tolerance within schools.

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